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Developments in Indochina

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23 January 1973

Page Denied

DEVELOPMENTS IN INDOCHINA

(Information as of 1500)

VIETNAM

As a result of resupply efforts in recent months, Communist forces in South Vietnam are well supplied with tanks and heavy artillery. The Communists are pushing through a new road to resupply tactical units in eastern Quang Tin Province. [REDACTED]

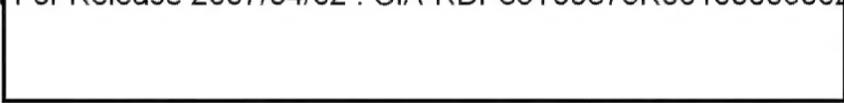
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CAMBODIA

Government forces have moved into the former training camp at Romeas.

25X1


23 January 1973


VIETNAM

The firepower of Communist forces in many areas of South Vietnam will increase dramatically in the next few weeks as large numbers of tanks and artillery weapons arrive from the north. Some 200 tanks and armored personnel carriers along with a like number of artillery weapons have been detected moving through the infiltration pipeline in recent months. Other weapons probably have passed through the system during this period undetected. The artillery includes long range 122-mm. and 130-mm. field guns and light anti-aircraft weapons, such as 23-mm. and 37-mm. guns. The equipment is destined for the central highlands and coastal provinces of central South Vietnam and the COSVN area of the country. Some of it has probably arrived.

The types of weapons noted do not pose an increased threat since all have been in use by the Communists in the South for some time. The additions, however, do involve a considerably greater quantity of weapons than ever detected en route during such a short period in the past. The shipments are doubtless intended in part, at least, to make up for heavy Communist losses and to build up stockpiles of heavy equipment prior to a cease-fire. The presence of the equipment nevertheless will significantly enhance the artillery support of the Communists if they choose to renew the fighting after a cease-fire. It is possible that the Communists view the added artillery as making up for the heavy manpower losses in their main force infantry units. Infantry troops have been detected moving through the infiltration pipeline this dry season, but there are not enough of them to replace fully the Communist losses.

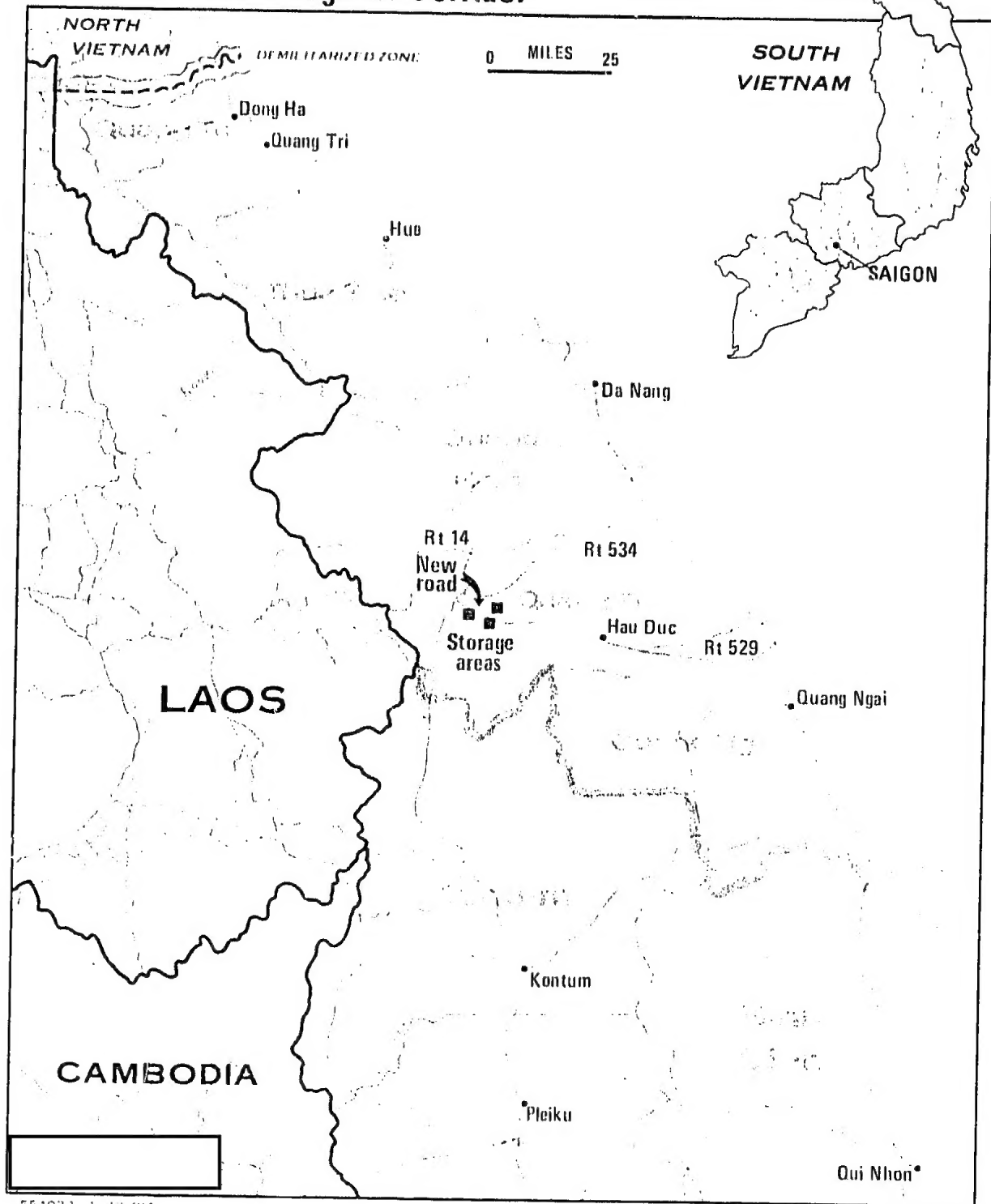
If the Communists intend to rely to a greater degree on the use of firepower in any future fighting, it is likely to be used along with small infantry forces in attacks against outlying and lightly defended government positions. The use of North Vietnamese tanks and heavy artillery in such attacks would give the Communists a firepower advantage and complicate government defenses.



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23 January 1973

New Communist Logistic Corridor



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New Road to the Lowlands

In late August, US air observers reported a new road in the early stages of construction in the mountains of western Quang Tin Province, near the junction of Routes 14 and 534 at Kham Duc, 52 miles southwest of Da Nang. Recent observations reveal an extension of that road east-southeasterly for at least 18 miles from near the Route 14/534 junction. The road is in excellent condition and is carrying heavy Communist vehicular traffic. If extended for another 12 miles, the road would connect with the existing Route 529 west of Hau Duc, almost 40 miles west-northwest of Quang Ngai City. When completed, the new road will provide another route the North Vietnamese can use to resupply tactical units in eastern Quang Tin Province from the main supply corridor along the Lao border.

[redacted] in the early fall of 1972 indicated the Communists had stockpiled large quantities of supplies in bases along the western half of the new route. Reportedly, supplies were being transported out of these bases to support operations by the North Vietnamese 711th Division in the Que Son Valley to the northeast; the new road to the south will facilitate supply movements into the lowlands of Quang Nam and Quang Tin provinces where South Vietnamese Government forces are conducting major sweep operations. [redacted]

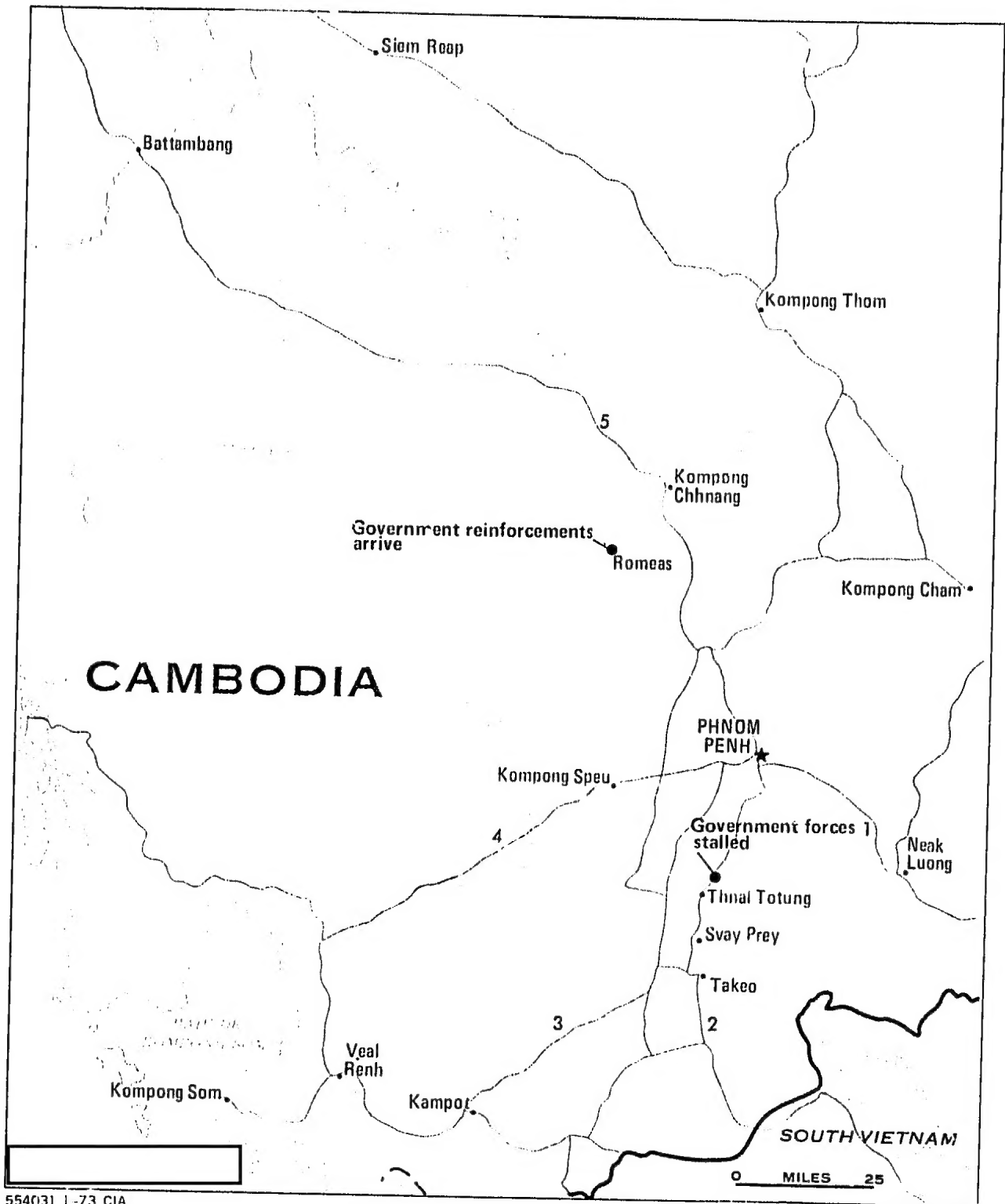
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23 January 1973

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CAMBODIA

Government reinforcements moved into Romeas with no opposition on 23 January. US and Cambodian air strikes apparently helped drive the Communists away from Romeas, which had been under steady enemy pressure for almost three weeks. Other government forces are continuing to make their way overland to Romeas. Efforts are now under way to evacuate some of the 130 wounded Cambodians at the camp. Although Romeas has no tactical significance, the Communists may have decided to wage an extended campaign against it to tie down large numbers of government troops in the northwest.

There have been no significant new military developments along Route 2 between Phnom Penh and Takeo. Government paratroops on the highway north of Thnal Totung are preparing another drive toward that isolated village. Farther south, government troops from Takeo that recently reinforced Svay Prey are consolidating their positions before moving up Route 2 toward Thnal Totung.

25X1

23 January 1973

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